



Town of Groton, Connecticut

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager
860-441-6630

Meeting Minutes

Representative Town Meeting

Moderator Scott L. Newsome, Representatives Karin Adams, Robert Bailey, Jeanne Baker, Joe Baril, Alicia T. Bauer, Rafael Burgos, Jr., Clarence Casper, Lynn Crockett Hubbard, Susan Deane-Shinbrot, Jim Evans, Thomas A. Frickman, Bob Garcia, Nancy Gilly, Frederick S. Kent, Matthew G. Longino, Jim Loughlin, Emily Maher, Brandon Marley, Jackie Massett, Lisa McCabe, Bruce A. McDermott, Roscoe L. Merritt, Jim Nault, Kathy Neugent, Lian Obrey, Juliette M. Parker, Richard J. Pasqualini, Jr., Shawn D. Powers, Carolann Quinn, Dutcha Slieker-Hersant, Joan Steinfeld, Irma J. Streeter, James L. Streeter, Archie Swindell, Patricia Wagner, Lori A. Watrous, Gary Welles, Ivy R. Williams, and Jonathan Wilson.

Wednesday, April 12, 2017

7:30 PM

Groton Senior Center

REGULAR MEETING

Moderator Scott Newsome called the meeting to order at 7:38 p.m.

A. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Moderator Newsome, Rep. Adams, Rep. Bailey, Rep. Baker, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Burgos, Jr., Rep. Casper, Rep. Kent, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Evans, Rep. Gilly, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Maher, Rep. Massett, Rep. McCabe, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Nault, Rep. Neugent, Rep. Obrey, Rep. Parker, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Quinn, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Slieker-Hersant, Rep. Swindell and Rep. Welles
Members Absent: Rep. Baril, Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, Rep. Frickman, Rep. Garcia, Rep. Longino, Rep. Marley, Rep. Powers, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Wagner, Rep. Watrous, Rep. Williams and Rep. Wilson

Moderator Newsome stated that 28 members were present and he declared a quorum.

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Finance Director Cindy Landry, Director Human Resources/Risk Mgmt Robert Zagami, Town Mayor Bruce Flax, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Town Clerk Office Assistant II Michael Thorpe.

B. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The members observed a moment of silence followed by the Salute to the Flag.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MARCH 8, 2017

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Adams, seconded by Rep. Bailey.

The vote on approval of the minutes carried 26 in favor, 2 abstentions. Abstaining: Reps. Massett and Neugent

D. CITIZENS' PETITIONS

Moderator Newsome read a letter submitted by Mike Whitney, 112 Deerfield Dr., Mystic. Mr. Whitney's stated the he has concern over the Education Budget and urged the RTM to support the budget without cuts. He offered numerous reasons why he believes that it is the responsibility of the Town to provide for our children and their education. He asked the RTM to look for other areas within the budget to cut and consider raising taxes if necessary instead of crippling our schools and robbing our children of the educational opportunities they deserve.

E. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS

Moderator Newsome stated that Reps. Deane-Shinbrot, Wagner and Wilson notified the Town Clerk of their absence.

Moderator Newsome reported on Education Cost Sharing Funding. He stated that State Senator Heather Somers and State Representatives Joe de la Cruz and Christine Conley are urging that letters be sent to the Appropriations Committee in Hartford explaining what these cuts would do to

the Town. He continued to say that he personally talked with Representative Conley about getting the formula changed that computes the ECS grant money. He hopes to get more information on changing that formula in the near future. He stated the address to mail the letters to is: Appropriations Committee, Legislative Building, Room 2700, Hartford, CT 06106 and the website is cga.ct.gov.

The Moderator read the Town Council referral 2017-0084 Resolution authorizing a 2017 CIP project to replace GMTV studio lighting with LED lights at the Groton Public Library. He referred the matter to the Community Development & Services Committee to report to the full RTM with their recommendation at the May 10, 2017 regular RTM meeting.

Rep. Powers arrived, 29 members present.

F. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER

1. Financial report

Town Manager Mark Oefinger reported that the Fund Balance as of March 31, 2017 was approximately \$9.9 million which represents 8.1% of the FYE General Fund adopted budget. He reported that the FYE 2017 General Contingency budget was appropriated at \$425,000 with a current balance of \$299,821. He stated the approved and pending transfers are listed in the Town Manager's News. He reported that the Capital Reserve Fund balance as of March 31, 2017 was \$1.5 million.

2. Monthly briefing

Town Manager Mark Oefinger highlighted items from the Town Manager's Monthly News report. He gave an update of the reconstruction of Crystal Lake Road which is planned for completion in June 2018. He announced the final stage of the LED street light conversion project which began on April 5, 2017. He mentioned that Attachment 1 was a flyer of the 2017 SCRRRA Household Hazardous Waste Collection Schedule. He referred to Attachment 4, the Town Council FYE 2018 Budget Review Calendar that was revised on April 12, 2017. He referred to Attachment 5, a press release from the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation regarding the Gold Star Bridge I-95 southbound rehabilitation project set to begin on April 17, 2017. He mentioned that Attachment 7 was an invitation from the Groton Public for the Arbor Day Celebration and Tree Planting Ceremony on April 28th at 10:00 a.m. at the Groton Public Library. He referred to Attachment 8, an invitation from the Submarine Base for the 117th Submarine Birthday Ball on April 29th at 6:00 p.m at Foxwoods Resort - Fox Towers. He referred to Attachment 9, an updated report from the Office of Planning and Development Services regarding current projects and recent activity in the Planning, Inspection Services and Economic and Community Development divisions.

G. REPORT ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The report was included in the Town Manager's News.

H. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

None.

I. LIAISON REPORTS

1. Economic Development Commission

Rep. Powers reviewed items discussed at the April 6, 2017 meeting, including the Airport Development Zone which is now complete and Public Property Redevelopment. Properties on the agenda included: 517/519 Gold Star Highway, Groton Heights, Mystic Oral School and CT NEXT - Thames River Innovation Project. He stated that the Air Show scheduled for October 6th-7th is looking for more volunteers. There was discussion on outreach business visits and compiled information. He also reported on the Water Resource Protection District - Zoning review of wetland setbacks and business impact which included projects from Groton Utilities.

J. COMMITTEE REPORTS**1. FINANCE - Chairman Nault**

Chairman Nault read the minutes of the meeting held on April 12, 2017. The minutes are on file in the Town Clerk's Office. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and make a recommendation on Referral 2017-0053 Resolution Extending the Appropriation for the 2012 Road Maintenance/Rehabilitation Project. Also discussed, Referral 2017-0037 Contingency Transfer - Non-Departmental/Insurance and Claims.

Responding to Rep. McDermott, Town Manager Mark Oefinger stated that the road maintenance/rehabilitation project was a five year project which had a list that identified roads by the year they would receive maintenance.

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Maher and so voted unanimously.

2017-0053**Extension of Appropriation for Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Program****RESOLUTION EXTENDING THE APPROPRIATION FOR THE 2012 ROAD MAINTENANCE/REHABILITATION PROJECT**

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton (the "Town") approved Ordinance No. 277 at referendum on November 6, 2012, which appropriated \$11,200,000 and authorized borrowing in the same amount for the Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation project; and

WHEREAS, the Debt Policy and Management/Fiscal Practices of the Town provide that any appropriation for construction or other permanent improvement which has not been completely expended at the end of five years from the date thereof shall thereupon lapse; and

WHEREAS, the Town Manager has reported that certain additional expenditures remain to be made or financed for the project that cannot be expended or financed by the end of five years from the effective date of the last appropriating ordinance and has recommended that said appropriation be extended by reappropriating that portion of the \$11,200,000 which has not been expended or financed on the effective date of this resolution; and

WHEREAS, the Director of Finance has certified that whatever portion of said appropriation is extended may be financed by grants and Town general obligation bonds previously approved; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of the Town to complete the financing of the Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation project, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that any portion of said \$11,200,000 appropriation which has not been expended or financed on the effective date of this resolution shall be extended and reappropriated, provided that the total amount expended or financed as of the effective date of this resolution, pursuant to said appropriation under Ordinance No. 277, plus the portion which is reappropriated, shall not exceed \$11,200,000.

Refer to RTM.

A motion was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Gilly, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2017-0037**Contingency Transfer - Non-Departmentals/Insurance and Claims****RESOLUTION FOR FYE 2017 GENERAL CONTINGENCY TRANSFER**

WHEREAS, the Town Charter provides for General Contingency transfers during the year, and

WHEREAS, during the FYE 2017 budget process, the Town Council determined that Administration and Claim Payments and Unemployment would not be funded, and

WHEREAS, both accounts have incurred expenses this year of approximately \$41,600 which has been offset by lower insurance premiums and other savings, thereby necessitating a transfer from Contingency of \$16,334, and

WHEREAS, before this transfer is applied, the General Contingency has a balance of \$316,155 including pending transfers, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that \$16,334 be transferred from the General Fund Contingency function (#1074) to the Insurance and Claims function (#1070) and referred to the RTM for approval.

A motion was made by Rep. Nault, seconded by Rep. Evans, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SERVICES - Chairman Obrey

No meeting, no report.

3. EDUCATION - Chairman Neugent

No meeting, no report.

Rep. Neugent stated that the Education Committee meeting was re-scheduled for May 3, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. in Classroom B at the Groton Senior Center.

4. RECREATION - Chairman Wilson

No meeting, no report.

5. PUBLIC SAFETY - Chairman McDermott

No meeting, no report.

6. PUBLIC WORKS - Chairman Deane-Shinbrot

No meeting, no report.

7. RULES & PROCEDURES - Chairman Massett

No meeting, no report.

K. BUDGET DISCUSSIONS

Rep. McDermott urged members to watch the Town Council Budget sessions.

Responding to Rep. Neugent, Town Manager Mark Oefinger stated that as result of the uncertainty in the State education funding, four revenue alternatives were considered. All four alternatives would use the same FYE 2018 proposed expenditures and revenue estimates but exclude State revenues. The amount of State revenue the Town would receive would differ in each scenario and then the resulting local mill rate would be determined base on the State revenue in each scenario. He stated that he submitted this budget using scenario 2 which uses the estimated current year FYE 2017 State revenues and reduces Education Cost Sharing grant funding by \$5 million. He continued to say that it appears the Town Council has been utilizing scenario 2 in its budget deliberations but because of the uncertainty that exists, we may not be cutting enough or possibly too much. He noted that the legislature passed and the Governor signed Public Act 16-3. Section 204 authorizes a municipality, regardless of the requirements of and without having to change its charter, to amend its budget if the amount of State aid to such municipality is reduced below the amount projected for such budget after such budget is adopted. The statute is effective until June 30, 2017 and is not limited to FYE 2017.

2017-0081 FYE 2018 RTM Annual Meeting Schedule

A motion was made by Moderator Newsome, seconded by Rep. Kent, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

L. OTHER BUSINESS

Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher reported that she had contracted with Turning Technologies to look into electronic voting upon the request of Rep. McDermott. She stated that the Information Technology Department, Library Services and Town Clerk Department looked into their system and found it to be complicated and not a user friendly system. It could be used for a regular RTM meeting where information could be pre-loaded but not for the budget sessions with so many amendments. An alternative program has been purchased by the Town with a electronic voting module included. The Provox Program may be available in the near future.

M. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Rep. Pasqualini, seconded by Rep. Gilly and so voted unanimously. The Moderator adjourned the meeting at 8:32 p.m.

Attest:

*Betsy Moukawsher, Town Clerk
Clerk of the RTM*

Michael Thorpe, Town Clerk Office Assistant II